

**Governor's Rural Affairs Council
Special Meeting Minutes
July 26, 2016
TELECONFERENCE**

- 1. The meeting was called to order by Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti at 11:03 a.m.**
- 2. Roll Call**

Member Agencies Present

Community College Board, Karen Hunt Anderson
Illinois Department of Agriculture, Rebecca Clark
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Wendy Bell
Illinois Department Employment Security, Shelly Tweedy and Jeff Fulgenzi
Illinois Department of Human Services, Francisco Alvarado
Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Steve Ettinger
Illinois Department Public Health, Don Jones
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Amy Walkenback
Illinois Housing Development Authority, Bill Pluta
Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Chris Merrett
Illinois State Board of Education, Craig Lindvahl
Rural Partners, Blanche Shoup

Not attending: Illinois Agriculture Association (Farm Bureau), Illinois Department of Aging, Illinois Finance Authority, Illinois Department Transportation, Southern Illinois University, and University of Illinois Extension. Norman Walzer, Colleen Callahan, Doug Hanks.

Citizen Members Present:

Luke Allen
Todd Kaeb
Heather Hampton Knodle
Sonja Reece
Larry Richards

Lt. Governor's Office Present:

Evelyn Sanguinetti, Derek Cantu; Susan Wynn Bence; Brian Costin

Quorum determined.

- 3. Approval of July 14, 2016 Meeting Minutes: Motion passed to approve.**
- 4. Lt Governor Sanguinetti Opening Remarks:** Announced that her office is working on a new initiative to expand GRAC's research relationship with Dr. Chris Merrett of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be finalized with WIU and the IIRA to outline the details of the arrangement.

5. Discussion of MOU and Approval of GRAC Annual Report

Chris Merrett summarized the objectives of the initiative, explaining that the research will target the four existing working group areas, which include Education, Health, Workforce and Economic Development. The IIRA has been tasked with examining underserved rural community issues, conducting a thorough investigation of the present structures and available services, while identifying gap areas and seeking best practices in these areas on a nationwide scale.

Whereas the annual report provided a basic overview of the issues and service disparities within the state, this initiative will offer a more in-depth analysis, providing the working groups with a comprehensive understanding and detailed framework for future recommendations.

Comments: Lt. Governor Sanguinetti said that she would like to add an Executive Summary to the Annual Report and make some organizational changes in the next few days.

A motion to approve the GRAC annual report was made/motion carried.

6. Upcoming events

Illinois State Fair, August 11-21, 2016

7. Member Updates and Reports

Rebecca Clark provided an overview of the events planned for the State Fair. Lt. Governor Sanguinetti added that she plans to be present at both the Springfield and DuQuoin fairs, and invited GRAC members to visit her tent to say hello.

8. Public Comments

None made

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made/motion carried.